



ESSA ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING, OCTOBER 2016

The Department of Education convened the second meeting of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Advisory Committee on October 19, 2016. This group is intended to provide feedback to the Department of Education as it works to create the statewide plan for ESSA compliance to submit to the federal Department of Education by March 6, 2017.

The Department representatives began by reviewing the timeline for the Committee's work, including the upcoming meetings with issue-specific groups in November and December (English language learner groups, civil rights groups, school libraries groups, talented and gifted groups, and others). They also reiterated their objective to have an initial draft of the plan ready for review in early January 2017.

The Department representatives also included an overview of the key principles the Committee is working under as it writes the ESSA plan, including:

- Having an inclusive process
- Communication with internal staff and other concerned parties (parents, the public, state leadership)
- Asserting Iowa's interpretation of ESSA
- Embracing the flexibility within the parameters of ESSA
- Equity in results
 - While Iowa does not face the issue of unequal access to high-quality teachers that many states do, there is work to be done in ensuring that all students are achieving at the highest level.
- Bringing the Administrative Rules and Iowa Code in line with the plan by removing the redundant or no longer applicable requirements

The group then reviewed the changes that were made to the "Theory of Action" document that had been revised based on the feedback from the August meeting. This document aims to align the strategies that the Department is using in each of the areas of the ESSA plan (Standards and Assessment, Policy and Communication, Finance, Accountability, School Improvement/Intervention, Educator Quality, Legal Foundations, and Early Childhood) to the purposes of those strategies.

The afternoon portion of the meeting was dedicated to in-depth review of two sections of the ESSA plan: School Improvement/Intervention, which looks at the state's role in supporting districts and schools that are struggling, and Accountability, or what measures of success districts and states will be responsible for reporting. These areas are closely tied to one another. The Department plans to exercise a multitiered system of support for local education agencies (both school districts and Area Education Agencies).

Department representatives reviewed the legal requirements in these areas and facilitated a conversation about the different optional measures the state can include. There was discussion around the best way to measure student growth, including the possibility of not measuring growth in the first year of plan implementation, which has both benefits and drawbacks. Discussion on this and other matters will continue at the next Advisory Committee meeting.

The next meeting of this group is scheduled for Wednesday, December 7, 2016.

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